

Remarks.

(1). Support in the specification.

Support in the specification for amendments may be found throughout the specification and in particular at p. 4, l 29-31.

(2). Rejection of claim 1 as obvious under 35 USC 103.

The examiner rejects all claims as obvious over Kristenson, US 5,167,577, in light of DE 2608792 A.

The examiner bases her rejection on three conclusions - First, that the air passages of DE 2608792 are rectilinear, second, that the air passages of DE 2608792 have a length at least four times greater than their width, and, third, that air flows generated by the device described in DE 2608792 would be "substantially laminar."

The applicants respectfully submit that the examiner errs in characterizing the air jets described by the German reference as rectilinear "hexagon air passages." The German patent refers to a "honeycombed jet casing" (emphasis added). The "radially arranged expanding jets" are conical having a cone angle less than 15 degrees. This is clearly explained in the examiner's own original citation of the German reference from a Derwent abstract: "Multiple nozzle for producing a radial displacement air flow for germ-free rooms, comprises a cylindrical air inlet pipe section leading into the circular sectional plane of a cup-shaped member. The surface of the latter consists of a honeycomb-like arrangement of conical nozzles of which the cone angle is less than 15 deg. (emphasis added)"

The applicants respectfully submit that the examiner errs in concluding that the air flows produced by the device described in DE2608792 would be "substantially laminar." The

examiner's conclusion is based on an erroneous characterization of the German reference as describing a device that produces displacement flow which is "clearly described as turbulent-free air." The German reference solves a problem in the prior art clean air ventilation systems in that disturbance sources such as lamps, human beings and technical devices can produce contaminated air. The German patent refers to two general prior art systems for clean air ventilation. In one such prior art system, "turbulence free displacement flows, coming from one side of the room...are generated which deviate floating particles from the clean-air room." In "another arrangement" described by the German reference, "clean air flow is conducted towards an operating area through an axial and turbulent...jet."

The German reference teaches a solution to the problem of "disturbance sources" in a clean air room by conducting displacement flows radially (i.e., precisely NOT parallel) against the disturbance source. The German reference plainly teaches that its conical air jets produce a conical expansion of the supply air directed radially against a disturbance source. The unparallel displacement flow having conical expansion could not be laminar flow in any case. Not only does the German reference NOT assign any importance to laminar air flow, it teaches that a "protection layer of wire mesh" is critical to the device. Such a wire mesh would introduce substantial turbulences, as the applicants have clearly explained in post-interview email communications with the examiner.

In any case, the applicants respectfully submit that the German reference does not teach a device that provides air flows characterized by parallel air streams. The German reference plainly teaches that its conical air jets produce a conical expansion of the supply air directed radially against a disturbance source. The claims as amended cannot be rendered obvious by the German reference. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the obviousness rejection.

(3). Conclusion.

The applicants respectfully submit that all claims are in condition for allowance and respectfully request prompt allowance.

Respectfully for the applicants,

/Robert C. Casad, Jr./

Robert C. Casad, Jr.
USPTO Registration Number: 51, 535
BUDDE, SCHOU & OSTENFELD A/S
Vester Søgade 10
DK-1601 Copenhagen V, Denmark
Tel: +45 7025 0900
Direct tel: +45 3337 6758
Fax: +45 7025 0901
E-mail: <mailto:RC@buddeschou.dk>

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